

The Lion

April 2007 Vol. CXXXII, No. 4

An Unofficial Newsletter for Members Only of
Saint Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado

APR 1 2007

Ensign of the Messiah

James Tochihara

FROM apostolic times to the present, some Christians have been tempted to turn back to the Law of Moses, away from the new order of the messianic kingdom. Non-denominational evangelicals are especially vulnerable, as they continue to search for dignified worship and legitimate authority. Certain preachers, in their vanity, seek to identify themselves and their ministries with the Jews, in order to have, at last, a sense of the sacred. They would have us keep Sabbath as Jews, celebrate Jewish feasts instead of Christmas, and wear the prayer shawl that is commanded in the Law of Moses. This is not the place for an exhaustive refutation of these errors. However, one symbol seems to occupy a central position in the web of confusion, namely the Star of David or hexagram.

Should we drape ourselves in the hexagram as they do? If it symbolizes the Jewish people and religion, then is it not the Ensign of the Messiah, the banner under which our Lord establishes

his Kingdom? First of all, the Star of David in Hebrew is *Magen Dawid*, meaning Shield of David. The Bible certainly does not mention any special six-pointed shield or star, David or otherwise. Historically, the menorah (the seven-branched candle in the Temple) was favored as the best symbol of the Hebrew people and their faith. Nothing survives from David's kingdom definitively, but common royal symbols at the time were the lion and the sun, both of which are mentioned in the Bible. Some rabbis, teaching long after David's time, mention the *Magen Dawid*, but only to condemn the symbol as superstitious and historically inaccurate.

It is well known that the symbol derived from ancient

magical practices, although it may be uniquely Jewish and without Egyptian or Babylonian influences. The structure of the symbol – an upward pointing triangle superimposed on a downward pointing triangle – may have held meanings similar to the Taoist symbol of yin and yang. Whatever the origin, it adorned amulets that supposedly brought good luck or warded off evil. Associated first with King Solomon (because his legendary wisdom gave him power over demons), the symbol sometimes appeared as a five-pointed pentagram, other times as a hexagram, known by the names “Solomon's Seal” and “Shield of David.” Denounced by rabbis as being neither Davidic, nor biblical, nor sacred in origin, the symbol had a life of its own, eventually landing on banners for Jewish communities in central Europe in the fourteenth century. The modern democratic nation of Israel (peace be upon them) chose the symbol for its flag precisely because it was secular.

Why would Christianity wish to associate itself with this symbol? It's quite possible that Jesus saw this symbol of folk magic in his day. If he saw it among his disciples, it could have inspired, if



anything, the comment, *O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* (Matt. 17:17) I suppose we too could plaster hexagrams everywhere if we wish to trumpet the extent of our historical ignorance, an inauthentic Messiah, or the non-biblical foundation of our faith. Well then, what is the true Ensign of the Messiah, since it is not the hexagram?

Let us examine the practices of the Christians who love hexagrams and would have us variously keeping Sabbath, rejecting Christmas, wearing prayer shawls, or all of the above. They insist that Jesus could not have been born on December 25th, because the winter solstice is a time of idolatrous sun-worship. The abandonment of the biblical Sabbath in favor of worship on Sun Day is also suspect. After all, sun-idolatry ensnared many of the ancient Hebrews. Moses condemned it in the Law (Deut. 4:19), obviously because some Israelites were guilty. Amazingly, King Manasseh still proclaimed that the sun was to be worshipped in the Temple itself (2 Kings 21)! How could Jesus be born on a day even remotely associated with sun idolatry? Besides, the Gospels hint that Christ was born in October during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, which celebrates God's presence dwelling among his people.

Before we let paranoia carry us away, we should dig deeper into the Scriptures. First of all, the Gospel of Luke hints that Jesus really was born December 25th, following the chronology of Zechariah's service in the Temple. It's just as likely that the Gospels connect the theology of Sukkot (God dwelling among us) to Christ's birth, precisely because Jesus was *not* born during this feast. If he had been born during Sukkot, why not simply mention this? John's Gospel has no trouble mentioning Sukkot in another context. The evangelists' message seems to be, "I know that Jesus wasn't born during Sukkot, but this feast very conveniently contains the theological meaning of his birth." Then, am I trying to assert that Jesus, the God-Man, wants to be associated with the sun? Of course, if he is the Messiah.

The song of Deborah and Barak reads: *Let them that love him [God] be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might* (Judg. 5:31). Who loves the Father more than the Son, who places his Father's will above his own? Let him be as the sun going forth. In the day when the Messiah comes to judge the people, *the sun shall be darkened in his going forth* (Is. 13:10), and God will cause the sun to go down at noon (Am. 8:9). As we know from Mark, at the Passion of our Lord, *when the sixth hour was come [that is, noon], there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour* (Mark 15:33).

On the other hand, for the righteous, *the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people* (Is. 30:26). Appar-

ently, the sun is a messenger of the Messiah. The Psalms go even further, saying, *For the LORD God is a sun and shield* (Ps. 84:11). Here we also see a prophecy of God becoming man, as this verse links the messianic symbol with God himself. (We can speculate that perhaps the actual *Magen Dawid* was emblazoned with the sun.)

If we want to boast of Jewish culture and learning, consider the following. The initials of Samuel, Moses, and Samson spell *shemesh*, which means "sun" in Hebrew. Samuel the priest, Moses the prophet-judge, and Samson the warrior hero represent all the aspects of the Messiah. It is only fitting that this spells "sun" because the Son of David shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me (Ps. 89:36), everlasting in the sight of God.

At first glance, the wearing of a prayer shawl, as the Law of Moses commands Jewish men, would seem to be unrelated to this discussion. True, many of the Christians who like to display hexagrams also like to wear prayer shawls. For this, they cite the prophecy of Malachi that the Messiah shall come *with healing in his wings* (Mal. 4:2). The word "wing" (in Hebrew, *kanap*) is also the term used for the sleeves and hems of long flowing garments, as well as the four corners of a sheet, and the ends of the prayer shawl. As we know, Jesus healed a woman who touched the wing of his prayer shawl, or at least the wing of his garment (Matt. 9:20; cf. Matt. 14:36). Therefore, Malachi sees a vision of the Messiah as a pious Jew wearing a prayer shawl. Well, I have no trouble seeing Jesus (blessed be he) as a pious Jew wearing a prayer shawl, because that is undoubtedly what he was and what he did.

On the other hand, this is not what Malachi sees in this particular vision, and it does the prophet a disservice to twist the scriptures of his hand. In context, Malachi says this: *For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings* (Mal. 4:1-2). So, the sun that burns and heals is Jesus' prayer shawl? It is better to set aside the wholly unwarranted and extremely forced imagery of the prayer shawl, as pious as it is.

Perhaps the idea of a winged sun perplexes some. This illustrates the problem of a twenty-first century American thrashing around in the elegantly detailed interior of the Scriptures. A sun disc with two outstretched wings was a nearly universal emblem of royalty in the ancient lands from Egypt to Assyria. Malachi (and ultimately God himself) seems to have no trouble ascribing this ensign to the Messiah, the eagerly awaited Son of David. Obviously, the

sun is a biblical symbol of the Messiah attested to by Malachi, Isaiah, and others, and one cannot help but wonder if this was one of the symbols of David's court.

Long ago, it was taught that the sun would burn the unrepentant on the Day of Judgment, while the same heat and light would be a balm to the righteous. Interestingly, this mirrors exactly the teaching of the Church Fathers on the light of heaven and the fire of hell. In other regards, the sun was believed to possess humidity in equal measure to its heat, and Eden was a much hotter and more humid place, as well as being more spiritually charged. When Man fell away from the heavens, the world became colder and drier. At the end times, the sun will burn seven times brighter. Will the new earth have been raised up seven times nearer to the throne of God?

Now, these aspects of the Christian mysteries do not have to be taken literally, but we must keep the imagery and order of the mysteries foremost in our minds. The Lord does not teach us one verse or chapter, but an entire Bible, speaking to us with the entire vocabulary of the mysteries. When *all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll* (Is. 34:4), then we shall face God with a nearness, in a state like the nakedness of Eden. On that day, we shall stand, or we shall not stand.

I have no doubt that the Eternal Word chose to be born on December 25th, and that he chose to rise from the dead on Sunday. The Scriptures tell us that he has chosen the sun, the great light of his own making, as his emblem, and who am I to criticize my Lord? St. John saw the Word of God going forth to smite the nations, while *an angel standing in the sun* (Rev. 19:17) cried out like John the Baptist. Certainly, the Book of Revelation presents this angel in the sun as close to the Mighty Angel who echoes Ezekiel's vision of God with *a rainbow ... upon his head, and his face ... as it were the sun* (Rev. 10:1).

The old Jewish Temple faced to the west (as we would speak of these things nowadays). The "front door" opened to the east, perfectly positioned to capture the first light of the sunrise on the mornings of the spring and autumn equinoxes. At that moment, the sun would appear over the Mount of Olives, where the Messiah would appear to begin judgment (Zech. 14), shining directly upon the Holy of Holies. Later, the early Christians would meet at dawn, chanting psalms to God as the sun rose. Living in the Messianic Age, they saluted, quite rightly, the true Ensign of the Messiah. Even now, in the Christian Temple on Sunday, we face east to the rising sun and receive the visitation of our Lord in the sacraments. We beseech him to break through the heavens and come in glory, *his countenance ... as the sun shineth in his strength* (Rev. 1:16). §



HOLY WEEK

AT SAINT MARK'S - A.D. 2007

PALM SUNDAY

Matins - 7:30 AM

Sung Mass with Liturgy of the Palms - 8 AM

Church School - 9:15 AM

Solemn Mass with Liturgy of the Palms - 10 AM

Evensong - 4 PM

MONDAY - WEDNESDAY

Matins - 9:30 AM

Sung Mass - 10 AM

Evensong - 4 PM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Matins - 9:30 AM

Evensong - 6 PM

Solemn Mass - 7 PM

Watch at the Altar of Repose

GOOD FRIDAY

Solemn Liturgy of the Passion - 12 NOON

'Seven Last Words' Devotion - 1 PM to 3 PM

Stations of the Cross - 6 PM

HOLY SATURDAY

Matins - 9:30 AM

Evensong - 6 PM

Solemn Paschal Vigil - 8 PM

EASTER DAY (PASCHA)

Matins - 7:30 AM

Sung Mass - 8 AM

Church School - 9:10 AM

Solemn Mass - 10 AM

Evensong - 4 PM

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of All North
America

The Right Reverend
BASIL

Bishop of Wichita and the
Diocese of Mid-America

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
OF NORTH AMERICA

The Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

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P A S C H A 2 0 0 7

Beloved and Christ-loving Clergy, Monastics and Laity of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Resurrected Theanthropos Jesus Christ, and, together with you and Orthodox Christians throughout the world, I joyfully proclaim that Christ is risen! Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! المسيح قام! Христос Воскресе! Hristos a înviat!

As we prepare to celebrate the most glorious Feast of feasts in our beautifully adorned church temples across the Heartland of America, let us recall and be inspired by another glorious Pascha - this one celebrated in stark Block 26 at Dachau Concentration Camp in 1945:

"The room was bare, save for a wooden table and an icon of the Theotokos. A creative solution to the problem of the vestments was found. Linen towels were taken from the SS hospital. When sewn together lengthwise, two towels formed an epitrachelion, and when sewn end-to-end they became an orarion. Red crosses, originally intended to be worn by the medical personnel of the SS guards, were put on these towel-vestments. On Pascha, May 6th, countless Serbs, Greeks and Russians gathered in and around the barracks. In the entire history of the Orthodox Church there has probably never been a Paschal service like that one. Greek and Serbian priests together with a Serbian deacon wore the make-shift vestments over their blue and gray-striped prisoner's uniforms. Then they began to chant, alternating from Greek to Slavonic, the Paschal Canon and the Paschal Stichera all from memory! The Gospel—"In the beginning was the Word"—from memory! And finally, the Paschal Homily of Saint John Chrysostom—also from memory! A young Greek monk from the Holy Mountain stood up in front of us and recited it with such infectious enthusiasm that we shall never forget him as long as we live. Eighteen Orthodox priests and one deacon concelebrated this unforgettable service."

May our Paschal joy approximate in some small measure that experienced by those courageous Orthodox Christians in Dachau sixty-two years ago.

Wishing you and your families a glorious Paschal season, and looking forward to being with you all at our Diocesan Family Reunion in Topeka, Kansas (June 14th-17th), I remain

Your Father in the Risen Christ,

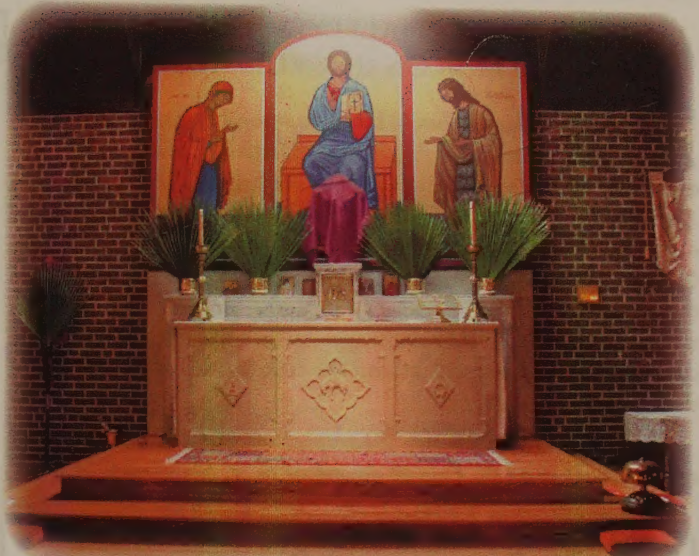
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+ BASIL

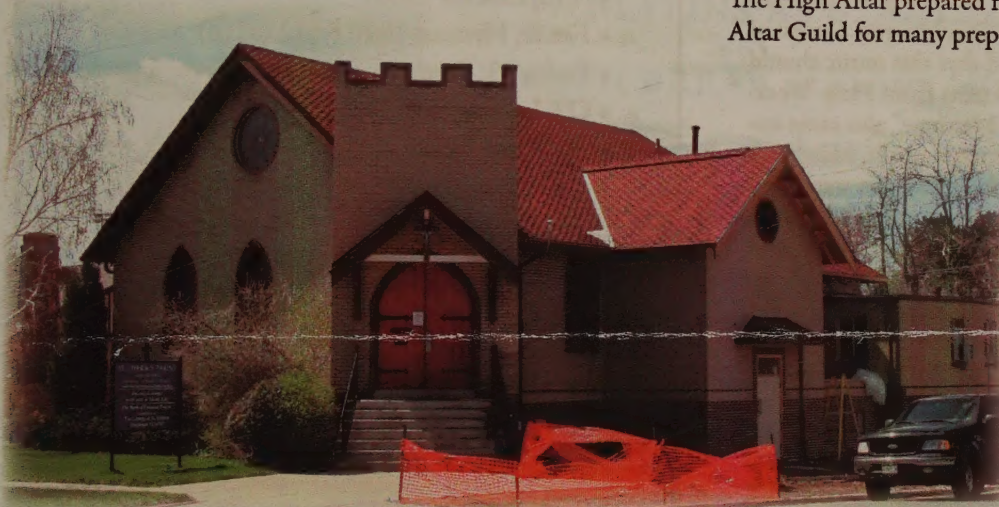
Bishop of Wichita and Mid-America



We were very happy to see about 30 SOYO teens from St. James, St. Luke's and St. Elias' parishes at the Lenten supper and Stations of the Cross on Friday. The St. Mark's SOYO prepared the spaghetti and served the Stations of the Cross devotion.



The High Altar prepared for Palm Sunday. Thanks to the Altar Guild for many preparations this Lent and Easter.



St. Mark's the Unfinished lingers on four months overdue for opening the new transept which will, Deo volente, add an elevator and stairs, a Baptistry and other amenities to the building. Every Lent for years we have managed to have construction and destruction under foot and over head. A prayer for good weather and healthy workers would be welcome.



John and Dottie Eklund prepared one of the Friday Lenten suppers and have supported the devotions by attendance each week.

Subdeacon James and Judith served a Friday supper and James has been the regular 'celebrant' at the Stations of the Cross.



St. Mark's Church Women sponsored a luncheon fund raiser in March. All the funds go to good projects in many places. Thanks to all who support the fund raising through Grocery certificates and the luncheons.



Rdr Jason Zacharias Falcone has graduated from College and headed off to Army Officer Training just after Mass on Passion Sunday. With all our young men in military service or away at University we have but a few brave acolytes serving at the Altar these days.

BISHOP HILARION (ALFEYEV) OF VIENNA AND AUSTRIA ON CHURCH MUSIC

MUSIC in church should be an avenue to deeper prayer, not a distraction, says a Russian Orthodox bishop and composer. His Grace Hilarion Alfeyev, Bishop of Vienna and Austria, is the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Community. His latest composition, "The Passion According to Matthew," was premiered in Moscow on March 27 and then performed in Rome on March 29. In an interview with ZENIT news agency, Bishop Hilarion discussed his latest composition, and the central role of music in the Orthodox liturgy.

Q: When did you receive the inspiration for this musical composition? Why the Passion according to St. Matthew?

Bishop Hilarion: The inspiration came out of the blue as I was driving from Vienna to Budapest on August 19, 2006, the feast of the Holy Transfiguration, according to the Julian calendar. I suddenly thought that I should write a musical composition on the Passion story and that this music should be based on the Orthodox liturgical texts from Holy Week. The title, "The Passion According to Matthew," also came immediately and I had no doubt that I should use St. Matthew's account of the Passion. By choosing this title I also wanted to declare my indebtedness to J.S. Bach, whose music has always been for me a source of deepest inspiration ... In my composition, the Orthodox understanding of the Passion story is reflected. It differs from the understanding that is characteristic of Western religious art, where accent is often laid on Christ's humanity rather than on his divinity. Orthodox tradition avoids naturalism in depicting the Passions: On the Orthodox icon of crucifixion, Jesus is depicted dead, not in agony, and his death on the cross is contemplated not as a moment of horror, but as a moment of glory. The same attitude is reflected in the Orthodox liturgical texts. Moreover, almost every time when these texts mention the Passion, they also mention the Resurrection. Being based on the Orthodox liturgical texts and inspired by the Orthodox singing, my music is as much about despair as about hope; as much about suffering as about redemption; as much about death as about resurrection.

Q: What role does music have in your personal prayer life?

Bishop Hilarion: Music plays a very important role in the Orthodox liturgy. As a bishop I celebrate liturgy every Sunday and on all feast days. The quality of the choir and the repertoire that it chooses is something of importance for me. Being formed as a musician from my very early years, I cannot completely dissociate myself from music when it is sung in the church, and even as I am reading liturgical prayers, I continue to hear the singing. Last summer I composed "The Divine Liturgy" and "The All-Night Vigil" for the choir a cappella. My main aim was to write such music that would not distract from prayer either for me or my parishioners. Singing in the church should be oriented towards prayer and should not be turned into a concert, as often happens. The best examples of truly prayerful singing could be found in Russian Znamenny chant, an equivalent of the Western Gregorian chant. This unison chant is simple, but it is meaningful and moving.

ANGLICAN CHANT MATINS

SUNDAYS FROM 1 APRIL TO 13 MAY
AT 9:45 O'CLOCK

1 April 2007 – Palm Sunday

- Antiphon for Lent
- *Venite*, Hymnal 1940 # 612 (a) (b)
- Psalm 97, *Dominus regnavit; exsultet terra*
- OT Lesson, Zechariah 9:9-12
- *Benedictus es, Domine*, Hymnal 1940 #623

8 April 2007 – Easter Day (Pascha)

- Antiphon for Easter
- *Venite*, Hymnal 1940 # 612 (a) (b)
- Psalm 93, *Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est*
- OT Lesson, Isaiah 25:1-9
- *Te Deum*, Hymnal 1940 # 613 E. G. Monk; #617 W. Croft; and last section to music at #613

15 April 2007 – Low Sunday

- All as on Easter Day, except:
- Psalm 66, *Jubilate Deo*
- OT Lesson, Isaiah 43:1-12

22 April 2007 – Easter II

- All as on Easter Day, except:
- Psalm 146, *Lauda, anima, mea*
- OT Lesson, Isaiah 40:1-11

29 April 2007 – Easter III

- All as on Easter Day, except:
- Psalm 36, *Dixit injustus*
- OT Lesson, I Samuel 2:1b-10

6 May 2007 – Easter IV

- All as on Easter Day, except:
- Psalm 116, *Dilexi, quoniam*
- OT Lesson, Job 19:21-27a

13 May 2007 – Easter V

- All as on Easter Day, except:
- Psalm 67, *Deus misereatur*
- OT Lesson, Ezekiel 34:25–end

WITH THE BLESSING OF OUR BISHOP BASIL OF THE WICHITA DIOCESE,
HIS GRACE, **BISHOP MARK** PLANS TO OFFER A **ONE DAY**
RETREAT AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH ON SATURDAY,
THE 5TH OF MAY 2007 on *The Formation of the Canon of*
Scripture with a Meditation on the Temptations of Christ.



THE SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY,
MAY 5TH, *The Conversion of*
***St. Augustine of Africa*, INCLUDES:**
MATINS AT 8:30, LITURGY AT 9:00
WITH BREAK AT ABOUT 10:00 FOLLOWED BY
THE FIRST ADDRESS AT 10:30 - 11:30
WITH QUIET TIME, SEXT (SIXTH HOUR) AT 12
NOON, AND LUNCH AT 12:30
SECOND ADDRESS 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM
FOLLOWED BY QUIET TIME AND BREAK, THEN
MEDITATION ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST
3:10 PM
AND CLOSING WITH EVENSONG AT 4:00 PM

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**I PLAN TO ATTEND AND WILL SEND IN MY \$20.00 / \$10.00 WITH THIS REGISTRATION
BEFORE MAY 2, 2007**

NAME _____

TELEPHONE _____ **EMAIL** _____

The suggested donation is \$20⁰⁰ (\$10⁰⁰ for 18 years and younger)

including lunch and breaks and any printed materials. It would be prudent to bring a Bible, given the topic is
the Canon of Scripture and the fact Bp. Mark is a learned Bible scholar. *Please detach this form and send to:*

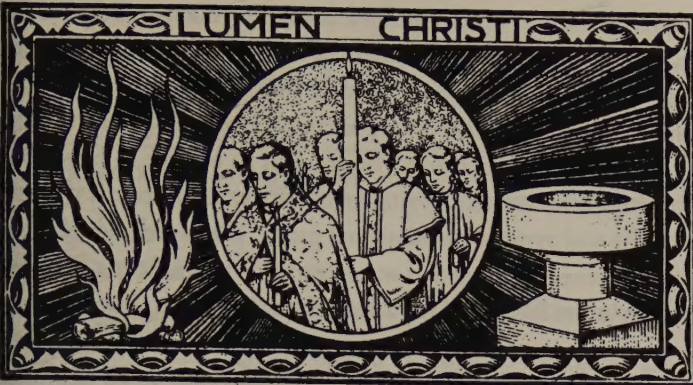
ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

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THE EASTER VIGIL

Dr. Pius Parsch

From *Seasons of Grace* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 185-189.

WE HAVE always in the past years thought highly of the Easter Vigil and regarded its celebration as the climax of the Church's year. But have we ever thought whether or not there is any underlying thought beneath all these texts and ceremonies, any one single common factor, as it were, which explains all these usages and relates them to each other? What, for example, is the precise significance of the wonderful symbolism of the ever increasing light, from the sparks struck from the flint to the glowing Paschal Candle? What is the meaning of the *Exsultet*, a chant more vibrant with enthusiasm, more eloquent, than any other in the whole of the Church Year? What is the significance of the special readings from Scripture, and of the water which is first blessed and then poured on the heads of the candidates for Baptism? Quite apart from the Mass, then, we have established three points of interest in the Easter Vigil ceremonies around which our thoughts can centre: the holy light, the holy word of God, and the baptismal water. But the single common factor still escapes us. It is only when we make sanctifying grace our guiding theme that our eyes are opened and we gain a deeper and clearer understanding of the Easter Vigil. The ceremonies that we perform this night do not consist of customs and prayers, the meaning of which is lost in the mists of antiquity. No; the ceremonies of "this most holy of vigils" are all inspired by one unifying thought: the grace of our adoption; that precious gift of Christ for which He underwent His passion, death and resurrection. I would go so far as to call this night the wedding night of grace. It is under this aspect alone that today's liturgy becomes intelligible. There are three symbols which, so to say, make

grace visible to us: the sacred light, the sacred word, and the sacred water.

I. Sacred light. What is it that we are doing when we strike a fire from flint, kindle the charcoal, bless this fire, light the Paschal Candle from it, carry it into the church, and from it light all the lights in the church, and the candles in our hands and in our homes? First of all, of course, the light is a symbol of Christ, the Light of the world. The Paschal Candle which burns in the church until the feast of the Ascension is a symbol of the risen Christ. Yet this cannot be the only explanation of the beautiful ceremony of light. We must extend the symbolism. The light is a symbol of Christ in as much as He brings us the light of grace. We remind ourselves of that passage in the prologue of St John's Gospel: "In him there was life, and that life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness ... There is one who enlightens every soul born into the world; he was the true light" (John 1:4-9). Thus the light signifies Christ the bringer of grace; but is also signifies grace itself.

It would be a rewarding occupation to gather together all the passages in Holy Scripture which speak about light as the symbol of grace. The Gospel and Epistles of St John offer an abundance of examples. "I am the light of the world. He who follows me can never walk in darkness; he will possess the light which is life" (John 8:12). The light which is life – what a wonderful expression for grace! It is in illustration of these words of Christ that St John relates the cure of the man born blind; a magnificent illustration of the transition from the darkness of sin to the light of grace. St Paul too makes use of this symbolism of light and darkness: "Once you were all darkness; now, in the Lord, you are all daylight. You must live as men native to the light" (Eph. 5:8). What he means is this: Once you were heathens in the night of original sin, but now, in Christ, you walk in the light of grace. You are like stars that shine in the darkness of this world. It is this thrilling transition from darkness to light that the Easter Vigil conjures up before our eyes. The clergy enter with the light of the Paschal Candle, and it grows lighter, ever lighter. We find a commentary on this wonderful increase of light in the words of the *Exsultet*. What is the basic idea contained in the chant? We know that it is a solemn preface to the Easter festival. But the Easter festival does not confine itself to the fact of Christ's resurrection. It is the festival of redemption, the festival of grace. It certainly looks with reverential gaze upon Christ, the Victor and Redeemer; but it also gazes – especially in this Easter Vigil – even more steadily upon us, the redeemed, the recipients of grace. We have only to read through the *Exsultet* to find there a whole host of passages proclaiming to us the extraordinary blessing that Christ has bestowed on us by giving us grace: "Christ it was who paid for us to the eternal Father the price of Adam's sin, and with His sacred blood expunged the writ that testified to our ancestral crime." "This is the night whose fiery pillar swept away the murk of sin; and all the Christians of the world today, this night sets free from earthly vice and sinful gloom, restoring to them

grace, uniting them in holiness." "So holy, then, this night, it drives away all evils, cleanses sin, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy, dispels all rancour, fosters harmony, and humbles princely pride." "This night when Heaven is wed to earth, the Godhead to humanity." These words can have but one meaning: Christ's redemptive work, achieved by His resurrection, has brought us from the night of original sin into the clear light of sanctifying grace, the grace of adoption.

Consider further; all the lights in the church, even the candles that we hold in our own hands, are lighted from the flame of this Paschal Candle. The whole house of God is bathed in a sea of light. Thus this Paschal Candle becomes our great baptismal candle. It went before us as a pillar of fire, and we followed after to our Baptism, carrying, as it were, the children of this light in our hands – we who were to become ourselves the "children of light", and to be reborn in grace. Truly magnificent is this symbol of grace which the Church has given us today.

II. Sacred word. There follows the second act of this Easter Vigil. We sit down for the one-time celebration of Matins, which consisted solely of readings from Scripture, the holy word of God. It is as though the liturgy now presents four tableaux before our eyes – four Old Testament tableaux. Is there any unifying thought in these readings from Scripture? What do these tableaux represent? We find there no indication, no type, of Christ's resurrection. But we have already found the key to our understanding of these tableaux. Once again it is grace, supernatural grace, which Christ won for us by His redemptive act. I have no time now to discuss these readings in detail. They could form the basis of a wonderful series of Easter meditations for you during the weeks that lie ahead. Let me just give you a few examples. The first prophecy describes for us the six days of creation. It shows us how God created nature. The prayer which follows – as usual, a commentary on the reading – explains to us that "God has wonderfully fashioned, and yet more wonderfully redeemed, mankind". Nature in its creation is an image of "supernature", the world of grace which Christ has brought us. Out of the chaos, the darkness of sin, there proceeds the pure bride of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of grace. Thus we can go through all the prophecies, explaining them all in terms of grace without doing violence to their meaning. The second prophecy describes the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea – a favourite symbol of Baptism. In the third prophecy Isaiah proclaims the blessings of God's kingdom, foremost of which is grace. In fact from these tableaux of the Old Testament we could construct an entire theology of grace.

III. Sacred water. The third act of the Easter Vigil is even more illuminating. The baptismal water is blessed, the candidates for Baptism baptized. Water is a very ancient symbol of baptismal grace. We remember that conversation which Jesus had with the Samaritan woman, when He spoke of the mysterious water which flows continually to bring eternal life (John 4:15). We remember too His sermon on the feast of Tabernacles: "If any man

is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Yes, if a man believes in me, as the Scripture says, fountains of living water shall flow from his bosom" (John 7:37 sq.). St John himself gives the explanation of these words: "He was speaking here of the Spirit, which was to be received by those who learned to believe in him." By Spirit here is meant sanctifying grace. Water, therefore, is the instrument and symbol of baptismal grace. The words which the Church uses in blessing this water are truly magnificent. We are given an entire history of salvation in terms of water: its creation, the flood, the use which Jesus made of it during His lifetime, the water that flowed from His side, and the Baptism of all nations. And then the Church straightway wants to demonstrate the power of this water. She wants to baptize with it without delay. Just as Mass without Communion is like a ring from which the precious jewel has been prised away, so too is the Easter Vigil without Baptisms. Let us pray that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened and that we may see what happens in a man's soul in the instant of his Baptism. We would relive that scene in the Jordan when Jesus was baptized, and see the heavens open, and hear the heavenly Father's voice: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). We would see the Holy Spirit come down as a dove into the heart of the baptized. We would see a miracle of grace greater than any of Christ's miracles. Yet we have no need to envy this man. We too bear the precious gift of grace in our souls. Each of us, in body and soul, is a vessel of grace, a Holy Grail containing, as it were, the blood of grace. On this holy festival of grace the crucified and risen Christ desires to fill it to the brim.

Conclusion. These three acts of the Easter Vigil are graphic illustrations of the grace of our adoption. They are concluded by the celebration of Mass. Here we have yet a fourth sign of grace. Christ's death and resurrection are not just isolated events which exert their influence on each one of us in grace. Grace, said St Paul, is dying with Christ and rising again with Christ. "With Christ I hang upon the cross, and yet I am alive; or rather, not I; it is Christ that lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). And in the Vigil Mass we read these words: "Risen with Christ, you must lift your thoughts above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God." In every Mass, and particularly in the Easter Mass, we die with Christ, and we rise again with Him. These are the two fundamental acts which bring about the life and growth of grace in the soul and in the Church. §



APRIL MMVII

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 PALM SUNDAY Matins – 7:30 AM Early Mass – 8 AM <i>A.C. Matins</i> – 9:45 AM High Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	2 MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK Matins – 9:30 AM Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	3 TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK Matins – 9:30 AM Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	4 WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK Matins – 9:30 AM Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	5 MAUNDY THURSDAY Matins – 9:30 AM Evensong – 6 PM Mass – 7 PM	6 GOOD FRIDAY Liturgy – 12 NOON Tre Ore – 1-3 PM Stations – 6 PM	7 HOLY SATURDAY Matins – 9:30 AM Class – 10 AM Evensong – 6 PM Paschal Vigil – 8 PM
8 EASTER DAY Matins – 7:30 AM Early Mass – 8 AM <i>A.C. Matins</i> – 9:45 AM High Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	9 EASTER MONDAY Matins – 9:30 AM Mass – 10 AM	10 EASTER TUESDAY Matins – 9:30 AM Mass – 10 AM	11 S. Leo of Rome, B.C.D. Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Mass – 12 NOON Evensong – 4 PM	12 S. TIKHON OF MOSCOW (Transferred) Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	13 Friday in Easter Week Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	14 S. Justin, M. Matins – 8:30 AM Latin Mass – 9 AM Class – 10 AM Evensong – 5 PM
15 LOW SUNDAY Matins – 7:30 AM Early Mass – 8 AM School – 9:10 AM <i>A.C. Matins</i> – 9:45 AM High Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	16 Feria	17 S. Anicetus of Rome, B.M.	18 Feria Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Mass – 12 NOON Evensong – 4 PM	19 S. Alphege of Canterbury, B.M. Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	20 Feria Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	21 S. Anselm of Canterbury, B.C.D. Matins – 8:30 AM Latin Mass – 9 AM Class – 10 AM Evensong – 5 PM
22 EASTER II Matins – 7:30 AM Early Mass – 8 AM School – 9:10 AM <i>A.C. Matins</i> – 9:45 AM High Mass – 10 AM Evensong – 4 PM	23 S. GEORGE, MARTYR Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM	24 Feria	25 SAINT MARK, EVANGELIST Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Mass – 12 NOON Evensong – 4 PM	26 Ss. Cletus & Marcellinus of Rome, Bb. Mm. Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	27 Feria Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	28 Saturday Office of Our Lady Matins – 8:30 AM Latin Mass – 9 AM Class – 10 AM Evensong – 5 PM
29 EASTER III Matins – 7:30 AM Early Mass – 8 AM School – 9:10 AM <i>A.C. Matins</i> – 9:45 AM High Mass – 10 AM	30 Feria	1 SS. PHILIP & JAMES, APOSTLES Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM	2 S. Athanasius, B.C.D. Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Mass – 12 NOON Evensong – 4 PM	3 INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	4 S. Monica, W. Matins – 7 AM Mass – 7:30 AM Evensong – 4 PM	5 Conversion of S. Augustine of Hippo, B.C.D. Matins – 8:30 AM Mass – 9 AM RETREAT Evensong – 5 PM

Surrexit Dominus vere, Alleluia! The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

BISHOP MARK was born on June 22, 1958 to John L Maymon and Catherine Hoffman at St Edward's Hospital in New Albany, Indiana. He is the fifth of eight children. Bishop MARK was baptized in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Church in 1958, and confirmed when he was nine. After attending elementary school (grades 1-8) at our Lady of Perpetual Help, he began attending New Albany High School, graduating in 1976.

The following fall he began studies at Indiana University South East, later completing undergraduate studies at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts Degree Majoring in Biblical Literature with an emphasis in Old Testament, and with a Minor in Business Administration, graduating Summa Cum Laude in May of 1985. In 1987, he completed the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Biblical Literature with the emphasis in Old Testament at Oral Roberts University. He graduated with Honors and was named Old Testament Student of the Year.

Upon graduating from the Seminary, Bishop MARK was offered, and accepted the position of Adjunct Professor of Old Testament at Oral Roberts University. His responsibilities included teaching Old Testament and New Testament Survey for all incoming freshman, as well as Biblical Hebrew I & II, Hebrew Prophets, Old Testament Introduction, The History of Israel, Wisdom Literature, Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations and Old Testament Theology. He was also responsible for the oversight of fourteen graduate fellows and co-taught Teaching Methodologies.

During his studies at Oral Roberts University, Bishop MARK was introduced to the Orthodox Church in his Church History class, by the V. Rev. George Eber, pastor of St. Antony in Tulsa, OK. Through contact with the Orthodox Church, he saw the Scripture less and less as the book of the university and more and more the Book of the Church. Fr. George invited him to 'come to the Church that gave us the Bible.' Listening to the wonderful hymnology of the Orthodox Church at Great Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy, the Scriptures were opened in an entirely different way.

Additionally, the Orthodox presented God as a loving Father and Shepherd who comes searching for those who are lost. Many personal struggles, unconquered through the academic study of the Scripture, began to dissipate as he learned how to struggle more effectually through the School of Repentance during Great Lent. On Great and Holy Wednesday in 1989, he was officially received into the Orthodox Church through Holy Chrismation.

He requested Metropolitan PHILIP's blessing to attend St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. With the blessing of His Eminence, Bishop MARK completed the degree requirements for the Master of Divinity Degree at St Vladimir's in 1991 and spent an additional year studying Church History and Patristics, under the direction of Fr. John Meyendorff. During the summers of 1991 and 1992, Bishop MARK worked at the Antiochian Village, under the direction of Fr. Paul Finley and Fr. George Alberts. He also developed the curriculum for the Christian Education programs for the summer camp programs (1991-1993).

After working at the Antiochian Village Camp and Conference Center, as weekend manager from 1992 to 1993, he moved to New Kensington, PA. There he assisted Fr. John Abdalah with services, taught Bible studies, enquirer classes and served on the parish council. He also began working as a counselor in mental health, dealing with dual diagnosis patients, i.e., those with both mental illness and substance abuse issues.

In the summer of 1997, Bishop MARK yearned to offer himself to the work of our Lord more fully and petitioned for Ordination to the priest-



hood, asking to serve, St. John the Evangelist Church in Beaver Falls, PA. On August 17, 1997, he was ordained by the hand of His Grace Bishop ANTOUN at St Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Wilkes Barre, PA and to the Holy Priesthood at St George in Pittsburgh, PA. on September 07, 1997.

He was assigned to St John the Evangelist in Beaver Falls, PA from September 1997 through December 31, 2000. In January of 2001, he was assigned to assist Fr. John Estephan at St. George in Grand Rapids, MI, until Fr. John's retirement in December of 2002. Upon Fr. John's retirement, Bishop MARK assumed all the responsibilities for the pastorate of St George.

Bishop MARK was nominated to the sacred episcopacy at a Special Convention of the Antiochian Archdiocese held in Pittsburgh, PA in July, 2004, and was elected to the episcopacy by the Local Synod of Bishops in October, 2004. He was consecrated as a bishop at the hand of His Beatitude IGNATIUS IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All The East at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus Syria on December 5, 2004.

WITH THE BLESSING OF OUR BP, BASIL OF THE WICHITA DIOCESE, HIS GRACE, BISHOP MARK PLANS TO OFFER A ONE DAY RETREAT AT ST. MARK'S ON SATURDAY, THE 5TH OF MAY 2007 on *The Formation of the Canon of Scripture and a meditation on the Temptations of Christ.*

THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR MAY 5TH INCLUDES:

MATINS AT 8:30, LITURGY AT 9:00

WITH BREAK AT ABOUT 10:00 FOLLOWED BY
THE FIRST ADDRESS AT 10:30 - 11:30

WITH QUIET TIME, SEXT AT 12 NOON, AND LUNCH AT 12:20
SECOND ADDRESS 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

FOLLOWED BY QUIET TIME AND BREAK, THEN
MEDITATION ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST 3:10 PM
AND CLOSING WITH EVENSONG AT 4:00 PM

ALL ARE WELCOME. PLEASE SEE THE POSTER PRINTED SEPARATELY

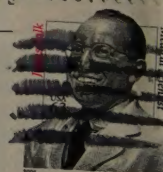
THE LION

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The Lion is a parochial newsletter of St. Mark's Parish, Denver. Editor: Fr. (V. Rev.) John Charles Connely, Bookstore and Photographs: Matushka Deborah Connely, Design: Bro. Benedict OSB oblate.

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